

Cato Institute 2025 Fiscal Policy Poll (Release I)

CATO INSTITUTE/YOUGOV • N=2000

MARGIN OF ERROR +/- 2.41%*. COLUMNS MAY NOT ADD UP TO 100% DUE TO ROUNDING.

1. As you may know, the U.S. national debt is \$36 trillion dollars, and the annual federal deficit is projected to be about \$2 trillion dollars a year. Knowing this, which is the better way to balance the budget?

■ Cut federal spending	49%
■ Primarily cut spending and raise some taxes	15%
■ Both cut spending and raise taxes equally	22%
■ Primarily raise taxes and cut some spending	10%
■ Raise taxes	5%
■ Total	100%

2. As you may know the federal government spends more than it raises in taxes. Which of the following things would you like the federal government to do about this? (Select all that apply)

■ Cut federal spending across the board	54%
■ Raise taxes for everyone	4%
■ Raise additional taxes on wealthy households	49%
■ Cut the number of federal workers	28%
■ Audit federal spending to find wasteful spending to cut	60%
■ Borrow money to pay for the budget shortfall	4%
■ None of these	5%
■ Other	8%

3. In your view, does the federal government spend too much money, not enough, or about the right amount of money?

■ Too much money	76%
■ Not enough money	8%
■ About the right amount of money	16%
■ Total	100%

4. For every dollar you pay in federal taxes, about how many cents do you think are wasted by the government?

■ Average	\$0.59
■ Standard deviation	\$0.29

5. What percentage of federal spending from 0 to 100 percent would you cut across the board to balance the budget, if any?

■ Average	40%
■ Standard deviation	25%

6. Do you believe reducing government spending will mostly help, mostly harm, or have no impact on the economy?

■ Mostly help	64%
■ Mostly harm	22%
■ No impact	14%
■ Total	100%

7. Over the past 10 years, federal government spending increased about 25% per person, adjusted for inflation. Has the increase in federal government spending improved or reduced your quality of life, or had no impact either way?

■ Improved	15%
■ Reduced	43%
■ No impact	42%
■ Total	100%

8. Which comes closer to your own view, even if neither is a perfect fit?

■ The less government the better	43%
■ There are more things that government should be doing	57%
■ Total	100%

9. Which comes closer to your own view, even if neither is a perfect fit?

■ The government should be doing more to regulate businesses	46%
■ Too often, government regulation of businesses does more harm than good	54%
■ Total	100%

10. If a president wants to withhold funds that Congress has passed a law to spend, what should happen?

■ The funds should be spent	43%
■ The funds should be withheld	26%
■ Not sure	31%
■ Total	100%

11. If a president tries to reduce the federal budget deficit by withholding funds that Congress has passed a law to spend, what should happen?

■ The funds should be spent	41%
■ The funds should be withheld	31%
■ Not sure	28%
■ Total	100%

12. Do you think there is waste, fraud, and/or abuse in federal government spending?

■ A great deal	47%
■ A moderate amount	19%
■ Some	20%
■ A little	12%
■ Not at all	2%
■ Total	100%

13. Do you favor or oppose conducting an audit and evaluation of all federal government spending to root out waste, fraud, and abuse?

■ <i>Total favor</i>	89%
■ <i>Total oppose</i>	11%
■ Strongly favor	57%
■ Somewhat favor	32%
■ Somewhat oppose	7%
■ Strongly oppose	3%
■ Total	100%

14. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of DOGE (the so-called Department of Government Efficiency)?

■ <i>Total favorable</i>	44%
■ <i>Total unfavorable</i>	48%
■ Very favorable	27%
■ Somewhat favorable	17%
■ Somewhat unfavorable	13%
■ Very unfavorable	35%
■ Never heard of it	8%
■ Total	100%

15. Do you think the approach DOGE is taking to cutting government spending will...

■ Mostly help the economy	37%
■ Mostly hurt the economy	39%
■ Not have much impact either way	7%
■ Unsure	17%

16. Do you believe that DOGE...

■ Does more good than harm	38%
■ Does more harm than good	41%
■ Unsure	20%
■ Total	100%

17. Which of the following comes closest to your own opinion regarding the Department of Government Efficiency:

■ I support auditing federal spending and support how DOGE is handling it	36%
■ I support auditing federal spending but do not support how DOGE has handled it	44%
■ I do not support auditing federal spending	6%
■ Unsure	15%
■ Total	100%

18. The U.S. federal government currently employs about 3 million federal workers. Do you think the federal government employs too many workers, not enough workers, or the right amount of workers?

■ Too many	51%
■ Not enough	15%
■ The right amount	34%
■ Total	100%

19. The U.S. federal government currently employs about 3 million federal workers. About what percentage from 0 to 100 would you say are jobs that are unnecessary?

■ Average	34%
■ Standard deviation	25%

20. Do you favor or oppose reducing the number of federal workers in order to reduce government spending?

■ <i>Total favor</i>	62%
■ <i>Total oppose</i>	38%
■ Strongly favor	32%
■ Somewhat favor	30%
■ Somewhat oppose	22%
■ Strongly oppose	15%
■ Total	100%

21. Overall, do you think that the federal government workforce is mostly non-partisan, or do you think they are biased in favor of the Democrats or Republicans?

■ Non-partisan	48%
■ Biased in favor of the Democrats	34%
■ Biased in favor of the Republicans	18%
■ Total	100%

[QUESTIONS 22-66 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE]

67. Voter registration status

■ Registered Voter	86%
■ Not Registered Voter	12%
■ Don't know	2%

68. Party ID

■ Democrat	33%
■ Republican	29%
■ Independent	27%
■ Other	5%
■ Not sure	5%

69. Political ideology

■ Very conservative	11%
■ Conservative	20%
■ Moderate	34%
■ Liberal	17%
■ Very liberal	11%
■ Not sure	7%

70. Recalled 2024 presidential vote

■ Kamala Harris	37%
■ Donald Trump	38%
■ Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.	0%
■ Jill Stein	0%
■ Cornel West	0%
■ Chase Oliver	0%
■ Other	1%
■ Did not vote for President	23%

71. Libertarian

■ Yes	13%
■ No	58%
■ Not Sure	29%

72. Family income

■ <30k	23%
■ 30k–60k	19%
■ 60k–90k	23%
■ 90k–150k	15%
■ >150k	10%
■ Prefer not to say	9%

73. Age

■ 18–29	19%
■ 30–44	25%
■ 45–54	14%
■ 55–64	19%
■ 65+	23%

74. Gender

■ Male	49%
■ Female	51%

75. Race

■ White	66%
■ Black	12%
■ Hispanic	11%
■ Asian	3%
■ Native American	1%
■ Two or more races	4%
■ Other	3%
■ Middle Eastern	0%

76. Educational attainment

■ No HS	6%
■ High school graduate	32%
■ Some college	18%
■ 2-year	10%
■ 4-year	22%
■ Post-grad	12%

77. Marital status

■ Married	44%
■ Separated	2%
■ Divorced	11%
■ Widowed	5%
■ Never married	32%
■ Domestic/civil partnership	5%

78. Employment status

■ Full-time	38%
■ Part-time	12%
■ Temporarily laid off	1%
■ Unemployed	9%
■ Retired	21%
■ Permanently disabled	7%
■ Homemaker	6%
■ Student	5%
■ Other	2%

79. Location demographic

■ Big city	21%
■ Smaller city	14%
■ Suburban area	37%
■ Small town	12%
■ Rural area	16%

80. Attention to news

■ Most of the time	45%
■ Some of the time	30%
■ Only now and then	14%
■ Hardly at all	9%
■ Don't know	2%

81. Religion

■ Protestant	30%
■ Roman Catholic	21%
■ Mormon	1%
■ Eastern or Greek Orthodox	0%
■ Jewish	2%
■ Muslim	1%
■ Buddhist	1%
■ Hindu	1%
■ Atheist	6%
■ Agnostic	6%
■ Nothing in particular	23%
■ Something else	8%

82. Importance of religion

■ Very important	34%
■ Somewhat important	27%
■ Not too important	15%
■ Not at all important	24%

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

YouGov interviewed 2316 respondents who were then matched down to a sample of 2000 to produce the final dataset. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race, and education. The sampling frame is a politically representative “modeled frame” of US adults, based upon the American Community Survey (ACS) public use microdata file, public voter file records, the 2020 Current Population Survey (CPS) Voting and Registration supplements, the 2020 National Election Pool (NEP) exit poll, and the 2020 CES surveys, including demographics and 2020 presidential vote

The matched cases were weighted to the sampling frame using propensity scores. The matched cases and the frame were combined and a logistic regression was estimated for inclusion in the frame. The propensity score function included age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of education, and region. The propensity scores were grouped into deciles of the estimated propensity score in the frame and post-stratified according to these deciles

The weights were then post-stratified on 2020 and 2024 presidential vote choice as well as a four-way stratification of gender, age (4-categories), race (4-categories), and education (4-categories), to produce the final weight.